ABSTRACT

The present invention comprises an improved device and method for automated cooking foods with a liquid such as water. In a preferred embodiment, the system comprises a cooking chamber (46); a controller (20); a residential home gateway server (10) comprising a memory and a communications interface operatively connected to the controller (20) and to the Internet (104); a hopper (42) for containing food; a stopper (44) in communication with the cooking chamber (46) and the hopper (42), the stopper (44) operatively connected to and selectively controllable by the controller (20) to provide a predetermined portion of the food from the hopper (42) into the cooking chamber (46); the stopper having at least one position in which it is sealingly engaged against the cooking chamber (46) and the hopper (42) to prevent steam generated by the cooking process from entering into the hopper (42) during cooking; a conduit (30) in communication with the cooking chamber (46) for providing liquid into the cooking chamber (46); and a valve (32) disposed intermediate the conduit (30) and the cooking chamber (46) and operatively connected to and selectively controllable by the controller (20). The method comprises receiving data from a remote source, the data comprising a desired amount of servings of the food and a starting time for preparation of the food; determining the cooking characteristics of the food, comprising liquid needs for the food and cooking time; providing food into the cooking chamber (46) from the hopper (42) in a quantity sufficient to satisfy the desired servings; providing liquid into the compartment from the conduit (30) sufficient to satisfy liquid requirements of the food for the number of serving requirements; and engaging a cooking element accessible to the cooking chamber (46) sufficient to satisfy cooking time requirements for the desired number of servings.